HOPE

HEALTH OPULENCE PEACE ENLIGHTENMENT

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CONSTANCY

Make and keep me *constant,*
Beloved God, to Thee!
Grateful for Thy Mercy too—
Which Mercy sets me free!

Make and keep me *constant*
In my willingness to serve;
With oceans of forgiving love
Held always in reserve.

Make and keep me *constant*
When the human wants to quit;
Make me strong, courageous,
And Master over it!

Make and keep me *constant*
To the very best in me;
Giving joyous service
In Love's sweet buoyancy.

Make and keep me *constant*
In faith, dissolving fear;
Let me live in "listening grace"
And feel the Master near!

Make and keep me *constant,*
From Love no more to roam;
Until my task is finished
And Thy Presence calls me Home!

Also in this issue:

"THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT";

THE CONSECRATION OF THE HANDS

THE HEALING CHALICE

THE GREAT WHITE BROTHERHOOD

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THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT

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When the lighthouse was built many years ago the island, now called the Isle of the Wise Virgin, was known as the Isle of Birds. Thousands of sea-fowl nested there. The handful of people who lived on the shore robbed the nests and slaughtered the birds, with considerable profit. It was perceived in advance that the building of the lighthouse would interfere with this and with other things. Hence it was not altogether a popular improvement. Marcel Thibault, the oldest inhabitant, was the leader of the opposition.

"That lighthouse!" said he, "what good will it be for us? We know the way in and out when it makes clear weather, by day or by night; but when the sky gets swampy, when it makes fog, then we stay with ourselves at home, or we run into La Trinité, or Pentecote. We know the way. The stranger boats need not to come here if they know not the way. The more fish, the more seals, the more everything will there be left for us. Just because of the stranger boats, to build something that makes all the birds wild and spoils the hunting—that is a fool's work. The good God made no stupid light on the Isle of Birds. He saw no necessity of it."

"Besides," continued Thibault, puffing slowly at his pipe, "besides, those stranger boats, sometimes they are lost, they come ashore. It is sad! But who gets the things that are saved, all sort of things, good to put into houses, good to eat, good to sell, sometimes a boat that can be patched up almost like new—who gets these things, eh? Doubtless those for whom the good God intended them. Who shall get them when this lighthouse is built, eh? Tell me that, you Baptiste Fortin."

Fortin represented the party of progress in the little parliament of the beach. He had come down from Quebec some years ago bringing a wife and two little daughters and a good many new notions about life. He had good luck at the cod-fishing and built a house with windows at the side as well as in front. When his third girl, Nataline, was born, he went so far as to paint the house red and put on a kitchen and enclose a bit of ground for a yard. This marked him as a radical, an innovator. It was expected that he would defend the building of a lighthouse—and he did.

"Monsieur Thibault," he said, "you talk well but you talk too late. It is of a past age, your talk. A new time comes to the Côte Nord. To hold back against the light would be our shame. Tell me this, Marcel Thibault, what men are they that love darkness?"

"That is a little strong," growled Thibault. "You say my deeds are evil?"

"No, no," answered Fortin; "I say not that but I say this lighthouse means good; good for us, and good for all who come to this coast. It will bring more trade to us. It will bring a boat with the mail, with newspapers, perhaps once, perhaps twice a month, all through the summer. It will bring us into the great world. The lighthouse is coming, certain."

Fortin was right but Thibault's position was not altogether unnatural nor unfamiliar. All over the world for the past hundred years people have been kicking against the sharpness of the pricks that drove them forward out of the old life, the free life, grown dear to them because it was so easy. There has been a terrible interference with bird-nesting and other things. All over the world the great Something that bridges rivers and tunnels mountains, fells forests and populates deserts and opens up the hidden corners of the earth has been pushing steadily on; and the people who like things to remain as they are have had to give up a great deal. The Isle of Birds lay in the line of progress. The lighthouse arrived.

It was a very good house for that day. The keeper's dwelling had three rooms and was solidly built. The lantern held a revolving light burning sperm oil. There was one of Stevenson's new cages of dioptruc prisms around the flame and once every minute it was turned by clockwork, flashing a broad belt of radiance fifteen miles across the sea. All night long that big bright eye was opening and shutting.

The Department of Marine and Fisheries sent down an expert from Quebec to keep the light in order and run it for the first summer. He took Fortin as his assistant. By the end of August he reported to headquarters that the light was all right and that Fortin was qualified to be appointed Keeper. Before October was out the appointment came back and the expert packed his bag to go up the river.

"Now look here, Fortin," said he, "this is no fishing trip. Do you think you are up to this job?"

"Do you remember all this business about the machinery that turns the lenses? That's the main thing. The bearings must be kept well oiled and the weight must never get out of order. The clock-face will tell you when it is running right. If anything gets hitched up, here's the crank to keep it going until you can straighten the machine again. You must never let it stop between dark and daylight. The regular turn once a minute—that's the mark of this light. If it shines steady it might as well be out. Yet, better! Any vessel coming along here in a dirty night and seeing a fixed light would take it for the Cap Loup-Marin and run ashore. This particular light has got to revolve once a minute every night from April first to December tenth, certain. Can you do it?"

"Certain," said Fortin.

"That's the way I like to hear a man talk! Now, you've got oil enough to last you through till the tenth of December when you close the light and to run on for a month in the spring after you open again. The ice may be late in going out and perhaps the supply boat can't get down before the middle of April or thereabouts. She'll bring plenty of oil when she comes so you'll be all right."

"All right," said Fortin.

"You understand what you've got to do? Goodby and good luck. You're the Keeper of the Light now."

"Good luck," said Fortin, "I am going to keep it."

The same day he shut the red house on the beach and moved to the white house on the island with Marie-Anne, his wife, and the three girls, Alma, aged seventeen, Azilda, aged fifteen, and Nataline, aged thirteen. He was the Captain and Marie-Anne was the Mate. The three girls were the crew. They were all as full of happy pride as if they had come into possession of a great fortune.

It was the thirty-first day of October. A snow-shower had silvered the island. The afternoon was clear and beautiful. As the sun sloped toward the rose-colored hills of the mainland, the whole family stood out in front of the lighthouse looking up at the tower.

"Regard him well, my children," said Baptiste; "God has given him to us to keep, and to keep us."

On the ninth of November at three o'clock in the afternoon, Baptiste went into the tower to see that the clockwork was in order for the night. He set the dial on the machine, put a few drops of oil on the bearings of the cylinder and started to wind up the weight.

It rose a few inches, gave a dull thud, and then stopped dead. He tugged a little harder but it would not move. Then he tried to let it down. He pushed at the lever that set the clockwork in motion.

He might as well have tried to make the island turn around by pushing at one of the little spruce trees that clung to the rock. Then it dawned fearfully upon him that something must be wrong. Trembling with anxiety, he climbed up and peered in among the wheels.

The escapement wheel was cracked clean through, as if someone had struck it with the head of an axe and one of the pallets of the spindle was stuck fast in the crack. It was a fatal injury.

Baptiste turned white, then red, gripped his head with his hands and ran down the steps out of the door, straight toward his canoe, which was pulled up on the western side of the island.

"Who has done this?" he cried. "Let me catch him! If that old Thibault—"

As he leaped down the rocky slope the setting sun gleamed straight in his eyes. It was poised like a ball of fire on the very edge of the mountains,—five minutes more and it would be gone,—fifteen minutes more and darkness would close in. Then the giant's eye must begin to glow and to wink precisely once a minute all night long. If not, what became of the Keeper's word, his faith, his honor?

No matter how the injury to the clockwork was done; no matter who was to be blamed or punished for it; that could wait! The question now was whether the light would fail or not, and it must be answered within a quarter of an hour.

That red ray of the vanishing sun was like a blow in the face to Baptiste. It stopped him short, dazed and bewildered. Then he came to himself, wheeled, and ran up the rocks faster than he had come down.

"Marie-Anne! Alma!" he shouted, as he dashed past the door of the house, "all of you! To me, in the tower!"

Nataline climbed the ladder and put her head through the trapdoor.

"What is it?" she panted. "What has hap—"

"Go down," answered her father, "go down all at once. Wait for me, I am coming. I will explain."

The explanation was not altogether lucid and scientific. Baptiste was still hot with anger and the unsatisfied desire to whip somebody. Angry as he was, he was still sane enough to hold his mind hard and close to the main point. The crank must be adjusted; the machine must be ready to turn before dark. While he worked he hastily made the situation clear to his listeners.

That crank must be turned by hand, round and round all night, not too slow, not too fast. The dial on the machine must mark time with the clock on the wall. The light must flash once every minute until daybreak. He would do as much of the labor as he could but the wife and the two older girls must help him. Nataline could go to bed.

At this Nataline's short upper lip trembled. She rubbed her eyes with the sleeve of her dress and began to weep silently.

"What is the matter with you?" said her mother, "have you fear to sleep alone?"

"No," she sobbed, "I have no fear, but I want some of the fun."

"Fun!" growled her father. "What fun?" He looked at her for a moment, as she stood there half defiant, half despondent, with her mouth quivering and her brown eyes sparkling fire.

"Come here," he said, drawing her to him and kissing her; "you are a good girl. I suppose you think this light is part yours, eh?"

The girl nodded.

"B'en! You shall have your share, fun and all. You shall make the tea for us and bring us something to eat. Perhaps when Alma and 'Zilda fatigue themselves they will permit a few turns of the crank to you. Run now and boil the kettle."

It was a very long night. No matter how easily a handle turns, after a certain number of revolutions there is a stiffness about it. The stiffness is not in the handle, but in the hand that pushes it.

Round and round, evenly, steadily, minute after minute, hour after hour; shoving out, drawing in, circle after circle; no swerving, no stopping, no varying the motion, turn after turn—fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven—what's the use of counting? Watch the dial; go to sleep—no! for God's sake, no sleep! But how hard it is to keep awake! How heavy the arm grows, how stiffly the muscles move, how the will creaks and groans! It is not easy for a human being to become part of a machine.

Fortin himself took the longest spell at the crank, of course. He went at his work with a rigid courage. His red-hot anger had cooled down into a shape that was like a bar of forged steel. He meant to make that light revolve if it killed him to do it. He was the Captain of a company that had run into an ambuscade. He was going to fight his way through if he had to fight alone.

The wife and the two older girls followed him blindly and bravely, in the habit of sheer obedience. They did not quite understand the meaning of the task, the honor of victory, the shame of defeat, but Fortin said it must be done and he knew best. So they took their places in turn, as he grew weary, and kept the light flashing.

And Nataline—well, there is no way of describing what Nataline did, except to say that she played the fife.

She felt the contest just as her father did, not as deeply perhaps, but in the same spirit. She went into the fight with darkness like a little soldier and she played the fife.

She ran in and out of the place like a squirrel. She looked up at the light and laughed. Then she ran in and reported. "He winks," she said, " 'Old One-eye' winks beautifully. Keep him going. My turn now!"

She refused to be put off with a shorter spell than the other girls. "No," she cried, "I can do it as well as you. The light is part mine, father said so. Let me turn."

When the first glimmer of the little day came shivering along the eastern horizon, Nataline was at the crank. The mother and the older girls were half asleep. Baptiste stepped out to look at the sky. "Come," he cried, returning; "we can stop now, it is growing gray in the east, almost morning."

"But not yet," said Nataline; "we must wait for the first red. A few more turns. Let's finish it up with a song."

She shook her head and piped up the refrain of the old Canadian chanson:

"En roulant ma boule-le roulant
En roulant me bou-le."

To that cheerful music the first night's battle was carried through to victory.

The next day Fortin spent two hours in trying to repair the clockwork. It was of no use. The broken part was indispensable and could not be replaced.

At noon he went over to the mainland to tell of the disaster and perhaps to find out if any hostile hand was responsible for it. He found out nothing. Every one denied all knowledge of the accident. Perhaps there was a flaw in the wheel; perhaps it had broken itself; that was possible. Fortin could not deny it; but the thing that hurt him most was that he got so little sympathy. Nobody seemed to care whether the light was kept burning or not. When he told them how the machine had been turned all night by hand, they were astonished. But that he proposed to go on doing it for a month longer, until December tenth, and to begin again on April first, and go on turning the light by hand for three or four weeks more until the supply boat came and brought the necessary tools to repair the machine—such an idea as this went beyond their horizon.

"But you can never do it, Baptiste," they said, "you are not capable."

"I would be crazy," he answered, "if I did not see what I must do. That light is my charge. In all the world there is nothing else so great as that for me and for my family—you understand? It is my Ten Commandments."

After a moment he continued, "I want some one to help me with the work on the island. We must be up all the nights now. By day we must get some sleep. I want another man or a strong boy. Is there any who will come? The Government will pay or if not, I will pay."

There was no response. The lighthouse was still unpopular, or at least it was on trial. Fortin's pluck and resolution had undoubtedly impressed them a little but they still hesitated to commit themselves to his side.

"B'en," he said, "there is no one. Then we shall manage the affair en famille."

He walked down to the beach with his head in the air without looking back. Before he had his canoe in the water he heard someone running down behind him. It was Thibault's youngest son, Marcel, a well-grown boy of sixteen.

"Monsieur Fortin," he said, "will you—do you think—am I big enough?"

"Certain," he answered. "you are bigger than your father, but what will he say to this?"

"He says," blurted out Marcel—"well, he says that he will say nothing if I do not ask him."

So the little Marcel was enlisted in the crew on the island. For thirty nights those six people—a man, a boy and four women (Nataline included)—for a full month they turned their flashing lantern by hand from dusk to daybreak.

The fog, the frost, the hail, the snow beleaguered their tower. Hunger and cold, sleeplessness and weariness, pain and discouragement held rendezvous in that dismal, cramped little room. Many a night Nataline's fife of fun played a feeble, wheezy note. But it played and the crank went around. The big lamp was full of oil and the great eye of the friendly giant winked without ceasing, through fierce storm and placid moonlight.

When the tenth of December came, the light went to sleep for the winter and the keepers took their way across the ice to the mainland. They had won the battle, not only on the island, fighting against the elements, but also at Dead Men's Point against public opinion. The inhabitants began to understand that the lighthouse meant something—a law, an order, a principle!

Men cannot help feeling respect for a thing when they see others willing to fight or to suffer for it.

When the time arrived to kindle the light again in the spring, Fortin could have had any one that he wanted to help him. But no; he chose the little Marcel again; the boy wanted to go, and he had earned the right. Besides he and Nataline had struck up a close friendship on the island which had cemented during the winter.

There was not much play in the spring session with the light on the island. It was a bitter job. December had been lamb-

like compared with April with its driving storms but through it all that weary, dogged crank must be kept turning—turning from dark to daylight.

It seemed as if the supply boat would never come. At last they saw it, April the twenty-ninth, creeping slowly down the coast. They were just getting ready for another night's work.

Fortin ran out of the tower, took off his hat, and began to say his prayers. The wife and the two elder girls stood in the kitchen door with tears in their eyes. Marcel and Nataline were coming up from the point of the island. She was singing. When she saw the boat she stopped short for a minute.

"Well," she said, "they find us awake, n'est-c'pas? And if they don't come faster than that we'll have another chance to show them how we make the light wink." Then she went on with her song.

You did not suppose that was the end of the story, did you?

No, an out-of-doors story does not end like that, broken off in the middle with a bit of song. It goes on to something definite.

You have not heard, yet, how near the light came to failing and how the Keeper saved it and something else too. Nataline's story is not told, it is only begun. This first part is only the introduction, just to let you see what kind of a girl she was and how her life was made.

Nataline grew up like a young birch tree, stately and strong, good to look at. She was beautiful in her place; fitted it exactly.

She could cook; she could swing an axe; she could paddle a canoe; she could fish; she could shoot; and, best of all, she could run the lighthouse. Her father's devotion to it had gone into her blood. It was the centre of her life, her law of God. There was nothing about it that she did not understand and love. The flashing of that light was like the beating of her heart—steady, even, unfaltering. She kept time to it as unconsciously as the tides follow the moon. She lived by it and for it.

There were no more accidents to the clockwork after the first one was repaired. It ran on regularly, year after year.

Alma and Azilda were married and went away to live. Nataline was her father's right-hand man. As rheumatism took hold of him, more and more of the work fell upon her. She was proud of it.

At last it came to pass, one day in January, that Baptiste died. Behind the tiny chapel at Dead Men's point a grave was made for Baptiste Fortin and the young priest of the Mission read the funeral service over it.

It went without saying that Nataline was to be the Keeper of the Light, at least until the supply boat came down again in the spring and orders arrived from the Government in Quebec. Why not? She was a woman, it is true, but Nataline could do this particular thing much better than any man on the Point. Everybody approved of her as the heir of her father, especially young Marcel Thibault.

What? Yes, of course. You could not help guessing it. He loved Nataline. They were to be married the next summer. They sat together in the best room, while the mother was rocking to and fro and knitting beside the kitchen stove, and talked of what they were going to do. Their talk was mainly of the future, because they were young, and of the Light, because Nataline's life belonged to It.

Perhaps the Government would give it to her to keep as long as she lived. Certainly, it was hers for the present. At all events, while she was the Keeper, the Light should not fail.

That winter was a bad one on the North Shore and particularly at Dead Men's Point. The summer before, the fishing had been almost a failure. A wild storm had smashed all the salmon nets and swept most of them away. They could find no caplin for bait for the cod-fishing. The few bushels of potatoes that some of the inhabitants had planted rotted in the ground. The people at the Point went into the winter short of money and very short of food.

There were some supplies at the store and they could run through the year on credit and pay their debts the following summer if the fish came back, but this resource also failed them. The last week of January the store caught fire and burned up. Nothing was saved. The only hope now was the seal hunting in February, March and April. That at least would bring them meat and oil enough to keep them from starvation. But the seals were few and wild. Less than a dozen were killed in all. By the last week in March Dead Men's Point stood face to face with famine.

Then it was that old Thibault had an idea.

"There is sperm oil on the Island of Birds," said he, "in

the lighthouse, plenty of it. It will keep life in the body. We must take the oil of the lighthouse to keep us from starving until the supply-boat comes down."

"But how shall we get it?" asked the others. "It is locked up. Nataline Fortin has the key. Will she give it?"

"Give it?" growled Thibault, "of course she will give it. She must. Is not a life, the life of all of us, more than a light?"

A committee of three, with Thibault at the head, told Nataline of their plan and asked for the key. She thought it over silently for a few minutes and then refused point-blank.

"No," she said, "I will not give the key. That oil is for the lamp. If you take it, the lamp will not be lighted on the first of April; it will not be burning when the supply-boat comes. For me, that would be shame, disgrace, worse than death. I am the Keeper of the Light. You shall not have the oil."

They argued with her, pleaded with her, tried to browbeat her. She was a rock. Her round under-jaw was set like a steel trap.

"No," she cried, "I tell you no, no, a thousand times no. All in this house I will share with you; but not one drop of what belongs to the Light! Never!"

Later in the afternoon the priest came to see her. He talked with her very gently and kindly.

"Think well, my daughter; think seriously what you do. Is it not our first duty to save human life? Surely that must be according to the will of God. Will you refuse to obey it?"

Nataline was trembling a little now. Tears stood in her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She was twisting her hands together.

"My Father," she answered, "I desire to do the will of God. But how shall I know it? Is it not His first command that we should love and serve Him faithfully in the duty which He has given us? He gave me this Light to keep. My father kept it. He is gone. If I am unfaithful, what will he say to me? Besides, the supply-boat is coming soon. When it comes it will bring food. If the Light is out, the boat may be lost. That would be the punishment for my sin. No, mon Pere, we must trust God. He will keep the people. I will keep the Light."

The priest looked at her long and steadily. He put his hand on her shoulder. "You shall follow your conscience," he said quietly. "Peace be with you, Nataline."

That evening Marcel came. "Well," he said, "you have done bravely. You were right not to give the key. That would have been a shame to you. It is all settled now. They will have the oil without your fault. Tonight they are going to the lighthouse to break in and take what they want. You need not know. There will be no blame—"

She straightened as if an electric shock had passed through her. She sprang back, blazing with anger.

"What?" she cried, "me a thief by round-about—with my hand behind my back and my eyes shut? Never! Do you think I care only for the blame? I tell you that is nothing. My Light shall not be robbed, never, never!"

She came close to him and took him by the shoulders. Their eyes were on a level. He was a strong man, but she was the stronger then.

"Marcel Thibault," she said, "do you love me?"

"My faith," he gasped, "I do. You know I do."

"Then listen," she continued, "this is what you are going to do. You are going down to the shore at once to make ready the big canoe. I am going to get food enough to last us for the month. It will be a hard pinch, but it will do. Then we are going out to the island tonight. Day after tomorrow is the first of April. Then we shall light the lantern and it shall burn every night until the boat comes down. You hear? Now go and be quick, and bring your gun."

They crossed the strait in silence and hid their canoe among the rocks on the island. They carried their stuff up to the house and locked it in the kitchen. Then they unlocked the tower and went in, Marcel with his shotgun and Nataline with her father's old carbine. They fastened the door and bolted it and sat down in the dark to wait.

Presently they heard the grating of the prow of the barge on the stones below, the steps of men stumbling up the steep path, and voices mingled in confused talk. The glimmer of a couple of lanterns went bobbing in and out among the rocks and bushes. There were eight or ten men. Three of them carried axes and three others a heavy log of wood which they had picked up on their way.

"The log is better than the axes," said one. Swing it back

and forwards and the door will come down like a sheet of paper. Wait till I give the word, then swing hard. One—two—"

"Stop!" cried Nataline, opening the window. "If you dare to touch that door, I shoot!"

She thrust out the barrel of the rifle and Marcel's shotgun appeared beside it.

There was amazement in the crowd outside the tower and consternation, then anger.

"Marcel," they shouted. "Let us in. You told us—"

"I stand by Mademoiselle Fortin," answered Marcel. "If any man tries to break in here, we kill him. No more talk!"

The gang muttered; threatened; looked at the guns and went off to their boat.

One of them called out, "Mademoiselle Fortin! you cause the people to die of hunger!"

"No matter," she answered, "the Light shall burn."

They heard the babble of the men as they stumbled down the hill and the grinding of the boat on the rocks as they shoved off. After that the island was very still.

Then Nataline sat down on the floor in the dark and put her face in her hands and cried. Marcel tried to comfort her.

She pushed him gently away and said "Come into the house. I want to talk with you."

Nataline put away the little store of provisions, made some tea and sat down opposite Marcel. For a time she kept her eyes turned away from him. Then she got up and moved about the room. As she came back to her chair she looked Marcel square in the face with her clear brown eyes.

"My friend," she said, "are you an honest man, un brave garcon?"

For an instant he could say nothing. He was so puzzled. "Why yes, Nataline," he answered, "yes, surely—I hope."

"Then let me speak to you without fear," she continued. "You do not suppose that I am ignorant of what I have done this night. You are a man. I am a girl. We are shut up alone in this house for two weeks, a month, God knows how long. You know what people will say. I have put my good name in your hand."

"It is not easy to say. I know you are honorable. I trust you, but I am a woman. There must be no love-making. We have other work to do. The Light must not fail. You will not embrace me—not once—till after the boat has come." She smiled at him like a sunburned angel—"well, is it a bargain?"

She put out one hand across the table. Marcel took it in both of his own.

The next day they put the Light in order and the following night they kindled it. They still feared another attack from the mainland and thought it needful that one of them should be on guard all the time, though the machine itself was working beautifully and needed little watching. Nataline took the night duty; it was her choice; she loved the charge of the lamp.

There was just enough work to do about the house and the tower to keep them busy. The weather was fair. The worst thing was the short supply of food. Though they were hungry, they were not starving and Nataline still played the fife. She jested and sang. Marcel admitted that it was not at all a bad arrangement.

His thoughts turned very often to the arrival of the supply-boat. The ice was well broken up already. The boat ought to be able to run down the shore in good time.

One evening as Nataline came down from her sleep she saw Marcel coming up the rocks dragging a young seal behind him.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, "here is plenty of meat. I shot it out at the end of the island." Nataline said they did not need the seal. There was still food in the larder. Marcel must take the seal over to the mainland and leave it on the bench near the priest's house. He grumbled a little, but he did it.

That was on the twenty-third of April. The clear sky held for three days longer. On the afternoon of the twenty-seventh the clouds came down from the north with considerable wind and a blinding fall of April snow. It was a bad night for boats at sea; a night when the lighthouse had to do its best. Nataline was in the tower all night. Once it seemed to her that the lantern was so covered with snow that light could not shine through. She got her brush and scraped the snow away. It was cold work but she gloried in it. The bright eye of the tower, winking, winking steadily through the storm seemed to be the sign of her power in the world. It was hers. She kept it shining.

When morning came the snow had almost ceased. Nataline stopped the clockwork and was just climbing up into the lantern to put out the lamp when Marcel's voice hailed her.

"Come down, Nataline, come down quick. Make haste!"

She turned and hurried out, not knowing what was to come. As she came out of the tower, her brown eyes heavy from the night-watch, she saw Marcel standing on the rocky knoll beside the house and pointing shoreward.

She turned and hurried out, not knowing what was to come. water between the island and the point lay the supply-boat, rocking quietly on the waves.

It flashed upon her in a moment what it meant—the end of her fight, relief for the village, victory! The light that had guided the little ship safe through the stormy night into the harbor was hers.

She turned and looked up at the lamp, still burning.

"I kept you!" she cried.

Then she turned to Marcel, the light sparkled in her eyes; she smiled and held out both her hands, whispering, "Now you shall keep me!"

There was a fine wedding on the last day of April and from that time the island took its new name—the Isle of the Wise Virgin.

THE HAND

Wisdom designed it,
Struggle divined it,
Ages refined it.

Reason restrained it,
Discipline trained it,
Art, the King, gained it.

Low life refused it,
Brute life abused it,
Spirit life used it.

Put, then, thy will in it,
Show the mind's skill in it
Selfhood fulfill in it.

F. Channing Haddock.

How important the hand is! How much we can determine the state of consciousness of a people by the use it makes of its hands! To the caveman, it was an instrument by which the club was wielded for protection, or to obtain mere sustenance; with it the carpenter deftly manipulates his tools to construct a mansion for his family; the musician uses it to coax from the harp strings the Music of the Spheres; * * * * moreover, both mind and soul are disciplined and refined through the mastery of the hands.

Says the famous English naturalist, Thomas H. Huxley, "I am and have been, any time these thirty years, a man who works with his hands—a handicraftsman. If the most nimble-fingered watch-maker among you will come to my workshop, he may set me to put a watch together and I will set him to dissect, say, a black beetle's nerves. I do not wish to vaunt, but I am inclined to think that I shall manage my job to his satisfaction sooner than he will do his piece of work to mine."

"The hands," points out F. C. Haddock in his book "Power of Will," "are said to indicate in a general way the nature of the owner. Yet few people know their own hands. This is because few people really understand the one condition of all knowing—*attention.*"

Nevertheless, the hand is one of the most perfect and obedient of servants. Industry, invention, science, art, reveal the range of its nobility, *according to the soul behind it.* To the ditch-digger, it may be a claw *only;* to the painter or sculptor, an instrument of creative power. A catapult or a wound-dresser; a sword-wielder or a swayer of the pen; a food-producer or a manufacturer; a tool or an instrument of the noblest humanity,—the hand is servant and king among the senses,—*an index of spirit values.*

It is one of the executive organs of the body.

As the body is the instrument of the mind, the hand, therefore, becomes one of mind's chief officers in life.

The savage wills to procure flesh for food; the outcome of the spear, the bow and arrow, the hook and net.

The hunter wills a permanent shelter; the outcome is the hammer, the axe, the saw, the trowel, nails and various building materials.

The home-dweller wills agriculture; the outcome is the spade, the pick-axe, the shovel, the hoe, the plow, the rake, the scythe, cradle, mower, reaper, threasher, mill.

The scholar wills education; the outcome is pen, ink and paper, the printing press, the laboratory, the microscope and telescope, the library, the school and college.

The educated soul wills art; the outcome is the chisel and mallet, the brush and pallet, the canvas and museum.

The artistic mind wills music; the outcome is the reed, string, horn; orchestral talent.

These all will government; the outcome is the throne and sceptre, the constitution, the court and council-room, the treaty.

Man wills religion; the outcome is the Altar, the Book, the Church, the Rubric, the concrete philanthropy of soul.

In every single step in this long journey, the hand has been omnipresent as an executive of the Will.

Training of the hand always reacts upon the growing mind. It may become a medium by which to culture the soul and develop the Will. Like Will—like hand; but as well, like hand —like Will. Whoever puts his whole hand to the growth of Will-power has power of Will wholly in hand.

Even "The impersonal activity of the Holy Spirit is well represented in the hand . . . ." says the Sage.

Continues He, "We have heard of the expression and we have all required the services of a 'helping hand' many times in the course of a lifetime; ofttimes we knew not from whence that 'hand' would come. The Holy Spirit in the choosing of a body through which He wished to render a service, or answer a prayer, must of necessity, accept the services of a lifestream who wears a garment of flesh and throughout the planet Earth, the Holy Spirit many, many times has reached forth a 'helping hand' through a wholly unconscious vehicle; by it rendering a service of charity, of blessing and of comfort.

In the activity of the New Age, which will be the final manifestation of an era of great perfection for the Earth and her people, every *hand* of every lifestream will become a *hand of the Holy Spirit.* The capacity to clench the first, either in greed or anger, will be replaced by the outstretched hand of blessing, of giving, of raising.

The dedication of the *hands* to the Holy Spirit was very important in the days of Atlantis. It took place within the Temple and was a most sacred ceremony. Individuals who, after long thought and serious contemplation, chose to relinquish the free-will action of their hands into the greater use of the Invisible Deity, would place their hands upon the Altar and, through the offices of a Priest or Priestess of the

Flame, have those hands united with the *Cosmic Will of Universal First Cause.* Through the centuries these individuals have carried that particular connection and their hands have become naturally qualified to soothe, heal and convey various types of blessing. This custom of the "Consecration of hands" is pursued down to the present day when an individual has chosen to dedicate his lifestream to a Cause and is admitted into certain Spiritual Orders.

There is no limit to the service that life can render through the hands of an unascended being by the dedication of a lifestream to a Cause. Like a draft in the army, every man must sooner or later give his *hands* as well as his *heart* to God, but those who volunteer and precede "the draft", experience in themselves the ecstacy of *pre-dedication.*

Man is prone to accept the blessings of God without much thought as to his tremendous responsibility in relation to using those blessings to help his fellowman. Wise are the men and women who take daily "stock" of the tremendous gifts and powers which are theirs and who, then, use their natural gifts to bless themselves, their fellowman and the race as a whole.

A daily "Thanksgiving" for the instrument of the hands; the power to use those hands; and a daily consecration of the hands to God, is a practice that connects the outer self with the Divine Presence and allows that Presence to give special blessings to all the life they contact *through those hands.*

The *willing hand,* dedicated to the Holy Spirit, can become *the Hand of God in action.*

Yours for the *handclasp* round the world; ushering in the Brotherhood of the New Age, already casting its beams across the horizon of the world.

Daily Prayer of Consecration of the Hands

Beloved Presence of God! I thank Thee for the gift of my hands and for the motivating power of Thy life by which these hands may serve Thee, my fellowman and the evolutions of which I am a part! Guide me in the use of my hands. Consecrate them to Thy service and never let me forget the glorious opportunity of having the use of my hands to bless all the life I contact and to help in establishing Thy Kingdom in my home, my business, my world and my affairs!

ONE'S TALENTS SHOULD BE USED FOR BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

Oh little brother, wending thy way helplessly and aimlessly through the maze of daily living, couldst thou live thy small existence without the rays of the great and beneficent Sun that lights thy pathway; or the crystal drops of water, cool and refreshing to thy senses; or the vibrant, potent air that thou mayst breathe without limit? Couldst thou long survive without the natural precipitation of thy food from the invisible through the hand and heart of Nature?

Think then, little brother, how dependent thou art on Powers outside and beyond thy control and thy comprehension, for thy very life. Thou art not so self-sufficient nor so independent as thou dost feel thyself. Every moment of thy life balances upon the freely given gifts of air, water, Earth, light and life.

Oh dearly beloved, how humble and how grateful then shouldst thou be for the great Intelligences Who give so beneficently of Themselves that thou mightest live!

Is it not then meet that thou shouldst render some balance to life for its self-sustaining opulence which is thine without reservation, without barriers of any sort? Can not Nature teach thee in some small measure what giving really means . . . to the just and the unjust alike; without thought of recompense; without study of worthiness and justice?

Oh, little brother, in every heart is planted some special gift of God that thou alone mayest pour forth ceaselessly, fed from a never depleted Source, to the blessing and upliftment of all mankind. Seek thou deep within thyself for that which thou mayest offer upon the altar of humanity and then, thou who hast received so plentifully from the storehouse of Nature, *do thou in turn follow this great Giver*, pouring forth *all of thy self* in some service which will benefit and enlighten all . . . not for gain, nor for glory, *but for the joy and pleasure of giving!* Remember, the Sun has not lost Its brilliant glory in Its ceaseless shining! Truly has it been said, that according to your will to give, will life give unto you.

THE CHALICE OF GOD'S COMFORT

Oh, thou beloved child of God's heart! Know thou that within thine own beating heart abides the Divine Image of thine own true Identity; that "Eternal You", made in the Image and Likeness of thine own Father-Mother God. With a constancy which is never-failing, the Great Creative Force which surges ever from God's Heart, pulses through that Image, nourishing and sustaining It until It achieves Its full expression in the world of form, through the human personality.

Within the acorn, lies the Divine concept of the perfect oak tree. In the lower kingdoms, where free-will does not express itself, the Divine Idea finds more freedom to manifest Its perfection. The seed bursts apart as the expansion of the Divine Concept of the tree or plant develops. Within it the surging creative *force* of the Holy Spirit expands the Divine Idea and the oak tree comes into being in all its glorious perfection, unless some limitation of the outer world is imposed upon it.

Thou, child of God, hast a freedom unknown to the tree! It must outpicture its design. There is no choice. Thy freedom permits thee to express thy Divinity, or become that which pleases the mortal consciousness; *that which thou hast chosen to be.* Thy discordant creations form veils which become shrouds that hide thy glorious God identity. Yet, constant It remains within thine own heart. Through It ever pulsates the energies which could be used to set It free. Bound only by thy free will, It awaits Its freedom.

Child of My Heart Flame! Offer now thy free-will upon the altar of thine own Christ Consciousness and accept now thy eternal freedom in every way, as God's Will for thee.

MEDITATION

Constant ever, the Christ Self within me abides, awaiting my will to be free from the limitations of my own mortal consciousness.

THE GREAT WHITE BROTHERHOOD

(Lives of Great Men and Women Who have Blessed the Human Race)

One of the greatest gifts of God to the mankind of Earth is the constant radiation of His blessings to them through Great Beings Who were once a part of Earth's people but Who have purified, perfected and raised Themselves into the Ascended Masters' Octave of expression, *even as the Beloved Ascended Master Jesus did.* These are the great Examples and Teachers to mankind, constantly endeavoring to show them the way back to the Father from Whom they came. Having passed the way of Earth's experiences Themselves and having mastered those experiences, They know how to help, standing ever ready and willing to give this assistance *to any and all who will ask for it.* These Beings are linked together by a common interest, serving the Father by blessing the human race. They are members of a Spiritual Order called "The Great White Brotherhood".

One of the Members of this Brotherhood is known by the name of El Morya. He is a great Ascended Being Who gives tremendous assistance to all the governments of the world. He is always the "Unseen Presence" at the Council Tables of all Nations; the Guiding Hand for all those statesmen and patriots who, through governmental service, desire to give greater freedom to their fellowman. At the birth of the Master Jesus, the Beloved El Morya was in embodiment as Melchior, one of the Three Wise Men Who followed the Star to Bethlehem, desiring to honor the new Messiah. Through the centuries since the birth of Christ, the Beloved El Morya has taken many embodiments, usually in the capacity of a king, soldier or patriot and participated in the Crusades to the Holy Lands. Later, in order to develop more Divine Love in His nature, He embodied several times as a simple poet and many of the lovely songs mankind enjoy today came from His heart and pen. "Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms" as well as "The Last Rose of Summer" were two of these.

Those who truly desire to know the Will of God and desire to try to do that Will have the assistance of this Great Master, *if they will but ask Him!*

SUGGESTED PRAYER

"Beloved Presence of God within my heart and Beloved Master El Morya! Help me to *want* to do the Will of God! Help me to understand that *that Will is good* and can *only* bring me *the fullness of every good thing, when I lovingly cooperate with It.* Give me the discretion, discrimination and insight to know what that Will is; then give me the courage, constancy, faith and perseverance to externalize that Will through my own daily activities, for the blessing of myself and my fellowman as well. I thank Thee for answering my every call!"

NEVER GIVE UP!

It is not wise for anyone to ever have a feeling of "I am holier than thou" toward *any* part of life, for *every* individual on Earth has made plenty of mistakes sometime, somewhere! It has been said that the only people who do not make mistakes are in cemeteries and another has said: "The man who never made a mistake never made much of anything else either. He leaves no honor to his name and no monument to his memory." Henry Ford forgot to put a reverse shift in his first motorcar (evidently being interested only in going forward—not in reverse!). Thomas Edison once spent a million dollars, years of time and tons of energy, on an experiment that never left the laboratory and has not yet rendered any known service to mankind.

So, it is not making mistakes that matters—it is what one is trying to do to correct them! It is not falling down that matters, it is how long you allow yourself to lie there. *You can always get up one more time than you fall down!* You can always try again—one more time—to succeed. You can profit by past mistakes and make them "stepping stones" to a permanent success. It is up to the individual himself. Different experiences affect different people differently!

Once upon a time, a very discouraged man who seemed to have lost everything of this world's goods, took a walk in the woods one Sunday morning. Sitting down upon a log, he noticed an ordinary ant pulling along a straw, much larger and longer than itself. The ant came to quite a wide "crack" in the trunk of the fallen tree—a space which he could not span

with his little body. He laid the straw down for a moment and, running up and down the side of the crevice (which seemed *very small* to the *man*), the ant saw there was no way to cross that open space. Suddenly, the ant grasped the straw again and pushed it across the crevice. Resting it firmly on the other side, he walked across on the straw and, pulling the straw with him, went on his way. *He used his burden to take him where he wanted to go!* His "burden" became a "stepping stone" for him. The man, encouraged by what he had seen, got up—tried again—with *real* success this time!

The writer of the lines given below is unknown to us but they express a great, eternal Truth:

"Isn't it strange that princes and kings
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings
And common folk like you and me
Are builders for Eternity?

Each is given a Book of Rules,
A shapeless mass and a bag of tools;
And each must fashion—e'er life has flown—
A stumbling-block or a stepping-stone!"

—Mrs. B. A. Blessing

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